



Authentic Baltimore

Program Guidelines

Purpose: The purpose of the Authenticity Guidelines and Heritage Resource Criteria is to assist the Baltimore City Heritage Area Association in identifying sites, services, and events that authentically convey the heritage of Baltimore.

Heritage Resource Criteria

Heritage Site

Heritage Sites are the central feature of the Heritage Area. For that reason, it is imperative that they function primarily to educate the public about local heritage. In order to qualify as a Heritage Site, a facility must provide a substantial amount of authentic interpretation above and beyond a simple statement of facts.

- A Historic Site
 - Must meet the definition of an authentic resource
 - Must provide authentic interpretation specific to that site
 - Must be open with regular, established hours
- A Museum
 - Must provide authentic interpretation which directly relates to local heritage
 - Must be open with regular, established hours

Heritage Service

Heritage Services play a supporting role in the program. They are not specifically designed to educate the public about local heritage, but they have authentic features which qualify them for recognition by the program. Since education is not the primary focus of these facilities, it is important that they provide an experience which is unmistakably linked to local heritage.

- A Research Facility
 - Must promote scholarship which directly relates to local heritage
 - Must be open with regular, established hours
- A Tour
 - Must provide authentic interpretation of local heritage
 - Must offer tour guides on a regular basis (at least once per month in season) or provide interpretive materials at an easily accessible public location
- Lodging
 - Must meet the definition of an authentic resource
 - Must provide authentic interpretation of local heritage. This interpretation must carefully outline how the building has changed over time, and the role that it has played in the history of the surrounding community. If the building was designed for a purpose other than temporary lodging, its original use must be clearly explained.

- Lodging continued
 - If a theme is used, this theme must show a clear relationship to local heritage. If the theme conflicts with the original use of the building, the difference between the two purposes must be clearly explained.
- Dining
 - Must meet the definition of an authentic resource
 - Must provide authentic interpretation of local heritage. This interpretation must carefully outline how the building has changed over time, and the role that it has played in the history of the surrounding community. If the building was designed for a purpose other than dining, its original use must be clearly explained.
 - If a theme is used, this theme must show a clear relationship to local heritage. If the theme conflicts with the original use of the building, the difference between the two purposes must be clearly explained.

Heritage Event

Heritage Events support the Baltimore City Heritage Area by making local heritage come alive. They give the public the opportunity to participate directly in the learning process. These events do not need to take place at an Historic Site, but they must result in a better understanding of local heritage. To qualify as a Traditional Event, an event must be considered a natural and integral part of community life. All staged events are classified as Interpretive Events, because they are intentionally designed to inform and entertain the public.

- A Traditional Event
 - Must be a commonplace activity whose importance is widely recognized by the geographic, social, or cultural community that it represents
 - Must demonstrate a clear relationship to local heritage
- An Interpretive Event
 - Must focus primarily on educating the public about local heritage
 - Must be promoted in a manner that emphasizes local heritage
 - Must clearly indicate the historic time period, season of the year, and location which are being interpreted
 - Must take place at regularly scheduled intervals at least once per year. One-time events may also be considered for approval, but the BCHA must be given the opportunity to review them at least two months prior to the event.

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Program Definitions

Authentic Interpretation: Organized information that reflects Baltimore's heritage through an accurate, objective, and culturally sensitive portrayal of people, sites, services, or events. The presentation of this information must not sacrifice historical accuracy for the sake of entertainment or popularity. This information must be made easily accessible to visitors through signage, printed materials or other media, exhibits, or tours.

Authentic Resource: A site, service, or event which reflects Baltimore's heritage by retaining features which existed during its period of significance, and by demonstrating an association with historic events, persons, architecture, engineering, or technology. It is not necessary for a site, service, or event to retain all of the features which it had during its period of significance, but it must retain enough of these features to present a clear picture of local heritage.

- For an Historic Site, evidence of authenticity is strengthened by listing in, or eligibility for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, or the Baltimore City Landmarks List.
- For a Museum, evidence of authenticity is strengthened by interpretation which meets professional curatorial standards. Collections which are not displayed in an interpreted historic building must have sufficiently detailed interpretation to convey a strong sense of local heritage.

Collection: A set of artifacts or objects which are acquired and preserved because of their value as examples, as reference material, or as objects of aesthetic or educational importance.

Dining: An historic restaurant, café, or tavern.

Heritage: A legacy passed down from preceding generations. This legacy encompasses physical features and the cultural perspectives which define them. Elements of this inheritance include natural features, landscape, history, culture, art, architecture, religion, folklore, and other social systems.

Heritage Event: One of the three types of Heritage Resources. There are two subcategories:

- **Interpretive:** A staged activity which is designed to be educational. This includes activities such as craft demonstrations, first-person re-enactments, dramatizations, and living history.
- **Traditional:** A commonplace activity whose importance is widely recognized by the geographic, social, or cultural community that it represents.

Heritage Service: One of the three categories of Heritage Resources. This category is composed of four subcategories: Research Facility, Tour, Lodging, and Dining.

Heritage Site: One of the three categories of Heritage Resources. This category is composed of two subcategories: Historic Sites and Museums.

Historic Site: A place (such as a landscape, streetscape, building, or structure) which has played a first-hand role in Baltimore's heritage. If any feature of this place has been moved from its original location or has been reconstructed, this change must be clearly explained.

Lodging: An historic bed & breakfast, inn, or hotel.

Museum: A gallery-based institution which maintains exhibits, displays, or collections.

Period of Significance: The span of time that has made the greatest contribution to the historical importance of a resource. In most cases, the physical features of a Heritage Site or Heritage Service should draw attention to that era.

Regular, Established Hours: A schedule of appointed times when a Heritage Resource is open to the public. Seasonal hours are acceptable, as long as the resource is open at least once per week for three months of the year. One-time events are excluded from this requirement.

Research Facility: An institution whose primary purpose is to promote scholarship about local heritage. These institutions often provide archival information, historical documents, and research assistance.

Theme: A recurrent, coordinated motif which intentionally creates an atmosphere of a specific place, time, activity, or culture. This motif is often expressed through a combination of cuisine, décor, and printed materials.

Tour: A guided experience or self-guided signage system or brochure whose primary purpose is to educate the public about local heritage. These experiences or brochures often feature a specific walking, biking, or driving route.